

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 04551 01 OF 02 151237Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00 PA-01
USIA-06 PRS-01 TRSE-00 /067 W
-----151245Z 047345 /43
R 151229Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9742

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 04551

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, FR
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON FRENCH GOVERNMENT
EFFORTS TO AID CRAFTSMEN

REF: A. STATE 000639; B. PARIS 02473

1. FOR CONSIDERABLE TIME THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT THE DECLINE IN INTEREST ON THE PART OF YOUTH IN MANUAL PROFESSIONS, INCLUDING TRADITIONAL CRAFTS. THIS CONCERN, HOWEVER, WAS NEVER TRANSLATED INTO SPECIFIC ACTIONS. ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS FOR THIS LIES IN THE REALIZATION THAT THE AVERSION TOWARDS MANUAL LABOR WAS A CULTURAL PHENOMENON ROOTED IN THE LOW SOCIAL VALUE PUT ON MANUAL TRADES AS COMPARED TO WHITE COLLAR JOBS WHICH HAVE BEEN SEEN TRADITIONALLY AS INHERENTLY INTELLECTUAL.

2. ACCORDINGLY, IT WAS DETERMINED THAT A BROAD SCALE EFFORT HAD TO BE MADE TO REORDER THE SOCIAL RANKING OF TRADES AND PROFESSIONS. THIS RESULTED IN A DRAMATIC GESTURE OF ESTABLISHING A SUB-CABINET MINISTRY TO DEVISE WAYS AND MEANS OF PROMOTING THE IMAGE OF MANUAL LABOR. ITS TITLE WOULD TRANSLATE ROUGHLY INTO
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PAGE 02 PARIS 04551 01 OF 02 151237Z

STATE SECRETARIAT FOR MANUAL LABOR AFFAIRS. IT WAS ESTABLISHED AT THE BEGINNING OF 1976 AND IS HEADED BY LIONEL STOLERU (34), A BRILLIANT ECONOMIST AND POLYTECHNIC ENGINEER AND CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING.

3. WHILE STILL IN THE PROCESS OF ASSESSING THE ACTUAL

SITUATION SURROUNDING MANUAL LABOR AND OF ANALYZING YOUTH ATTITUDES TOWARD SUCH EMPLOYMENT, STOLERU AND HIS SMALL STAFF HAVE MADE A SYSTEMATIC EFFORT THROUGH THE MEDIA AND PRESS RELEASES TO IMPROVE THE IMAGE OF BLUE COLLAR JOBS AND CRAFTS.

4. THE MORE SPECTACULAR PROJECT IN THIS CONNECTION WAS THE HOLDING OF A WEEK-LONG "FAIR" AT THE END OF JANUARY IN THE COURSE OF WHICH SOME 50 CRAFTSMEN, THE MAJORITY ENGAGED IN TRADITIONAL CRAFTS, DEMONSTRATED THEIR PRODUCTS, EXHIBITING THEIR SKILLS SINCE THEY WERE ACTUALLY WORKING AT THEM DURING THE ENTIRE FAIR, AND MADE THEMSELVES AVAILABLE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR TRADES AND ESPECIALLY TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AND INSTITUTIONS. THE FAIR WAS A GREAT SUCCESS SINCE IT ATTRACTED 150,000 VISITORS, MOSTLY YOUTH, A FIGURE WHICH WAS WELL ABOVE WHAT THE OFFICIALS HAD EXPECTED.

5. AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WAGE STRUCTURE AND GENERALLY OF ECONOMIC REWARDS FOR IMPROVING THE STATUS OF CRAFTS, THE SECRETARIAT URGED OFFICIALLY AND IN WRITING THE TRADE UNIONS AND EMPLOYER ASSOCIATIONS TO ENGAGE IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE VIEW TO FINDING WAYS TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS OF WORK AND COMPENSATION FOR MANUAL LABOR. AT THE BEGINNING OF FEBRUARY ONE OF THE UNIONS (FORCE OUVRIERE) TOOK THE INITIATIVE TO CALL ON THE NATIONAL EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION (CNPF) TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 PARIS 04551 01 OF 02 151237Z

NEAR FUTURE.

6. ALTHOUGH NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE QUESTION OF CRAFTS, THE SECRETARIAT IS CREDITED WITH THE INITIATIVE WHICH RESULTED IN TWO SPECIFIC PIECES OF LEGISLATION IN 1976 DESIGNED TO IMPROVE THE IMAGE OF MANUAL LABOR. THE ONE LOWERED THE RETIREMENT AGE FOR THOSE OCCUPYING JOBS CONSIDERED PARTICULARLY DANGEROUS OR TAXING, AND THE OTHER PROVIDED FOR TIME OFF WITH PAY IN PROPORTION TO A CERTAIN NUMBER OF HOURS OF OVERTIME.

7. OF SOME INTEREST IN THIS CONNECTION IS THE LAW NO. 73-1193 OF 27 DECEMBER 1973 COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS THE "ROYER LAW" BECAUSE THE INSPIRATION FOR IT CAME FROM THE THEN MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND ARTISANS M. ROYER. ALTHOUGH THIS LAW FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON

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PAGE 01 PARIS 04551 02 OF 02 151234Z
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NSAE-00 SIL-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00 PA-01
USIA-06 PRS-01 TRSE-00 /067 W
-----151244Z 047311 /43
R 151229Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9743

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 04551

COMMERCE AND SOUGHT TO PROTECT SMALL BUSINESSES FROM
COMPETITION BY LARGE COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS, ITS
PROVISIONS COVER ALSO THE SELF-EMPLOYED ENGAGED IN
TRADITIONAL CRAFTS.

8. IN ADDITION TO CERTAIN FRINGE BENEFITS IN TERMS OF
SOCIAL SECURITY, RETIREMENT AND FISCAL MATTERS, THE
1973 LAW SIMPLIFIES THE PROCEDURES REGARDING THE
RECRUITMENT OF APPRENTICES. THE TRADE UNIONS
CRITICIZED THE LATTER PROVISIONS ON THE
THEORY THAT THEY ENCOURAGE "DROPPING-OUT" FROM
SCHOOL AND ESTABLISH INSUFFICIENT CONTROLS OF THE
QUALITY AND PERIOD OF APPRENTICESHIP. AN ANALYSIS OF
THE LAW PREPARED BY LIAISONS SOCIALES HAS BEEN
FORWARDED TO DOL, EUROPEAN AREA SPECIALIST - ILAB.

9. ACCORDING TO REF B STOLERU WILL BE VISITING
WASHINGTON 20-24 FEBRUARY. WHILE HIS PROGRAM BEING
COORDINATED BY DOL IS LIKELY TO BE CROWDED BECAUSE
OF 21 FEBRUARY HOLIDAY, HE MAY STILL BE AVAILABLE
FOR CONTACT BY THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS FOR
AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON A SUBJECT IN WHICH HE IS
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PAGE 02 PARIS 04551 02 OF 02 151234Z

KEENLY INTERESTED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONNEL TRAINING, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, PUBLIC ATTITUDES, HANDICRAFT INDUSTRY, ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PARIS04551
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770053-0645
Format: TEL
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770240/aaaabjre.tel
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Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 639, 77 PARIS 2473
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3319307
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON FRENCH GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO AID CRAFTSMEN
TAGS: ELAB, FR, (STOLERU, LIONEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c138cec6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009